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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTO DOMINGO 004702

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [APER](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR DR. WILLIAM H. SCOTTI

REF: SECSTATE 167657

1. US Embassy Santo Domingo welcomes and grants country clearance to Dr. William H. Scotti to travel to Santo Domingo from September 21 to September 23, 2004. Purpose of trip is to carry out activities relating to dependent education and assistance to American-sponsored schools. Embassy will meet and assist at airport.

1. Hotel Accommodations:

Hotel reservations are confirmed at the Hotel Jaragua. Hotel Jaragua contact numbers are as follows: Tel: 809-221-2222 Fax: 809-221-8271 Per diem in Santo Domingo USD 107 (including taxes). The Embassy will be responsible for accommodations and M&IE. The following is the hotel reservation confirmation number:

Dr. William Scotti Confirmation #307498

US Embassy Contact while in the Dominican Republic:

Bainbridge Cowell Jr. is the Embassy Control Officer during this visit. Contact numbers: Office: 809-731-4307; Home: 809-472-1657; Mobile: 1-809-729-1636. In case of an emergency during visit, including medical, please contact the US Embassy Post One at (809) 221-2171 ext. 4398 or (809) 731-4398.

1. Travel Documents:

All official visitors are encouraged to enter the Dominican Republic on valid passports, with valid visas. If a visa cannot be obtained before entry into the Dominican Republic, a 30-day visa can be purchased for USD 10.00 in the airport terminal upon arrival. A USD 20.00 airport departure tax is charged to all non-residents leaving the country. Many US carriers include this tax in the ticket price, so please consult your ticket.

1. Monetary Exchange:

Visitors are encouraged to bring sufficient cash in US Dollars, traveler's checks or credit cards for cash advances. Many merchants in the DR do not accept US currency in payment for goods and services. Most commercial banks and hotels provide exchange services, with hotels offering slightly less favorable terms than banks. Banco de Reservas, a Dominican commercial bank, offers check cashing and accommodation exchange services in the Embassy from 0900-1535 during official workdays. USG employees are permitted to cash personal checks and can elect to either receive US Dollars or Dominican Pesos. US credit cards, especially Visa and Mastercard, are widely accepted in major cities and tourist areas.

1. Cellular Phone Rental:

Cell phone rental is available through Verizon, a local provider. Rental costs may vary, but on average cost is USD \$1 per day. Outgoing calls are approximately USD .50 per minute for calls within the Dominican Republic and USD .50 per minute, plus long distance charges, for international calls.

1. Country Threat Assessment:

A) Terrorism: The Dominican Republic (DR) is considered "low" threat post for terrorism. There are no indigenous terrorist groups operating in the DR. However, transnational terrorism is a possibility due to a number of factors, some of which include porous borders, a culture of corruption, inept police, and the Dominican Republic's support for the war in Iraq. These factors, and others, make the DR a potential

target for transnational terrorism.

B) Crime: The Dominican Republic is considered a "high" threat post for crime. Street robberies, pick pocketing, credit card fraud, ATM fraud, burglaries, and theft from vehicles are all common crimes in the Dominican Republic. If you are the victim of a street robbery, do not resist. Statistically, everyone who resists robbery is injured. Those who cooperate with robbers i.e., give them some money, are always left unharmed. To avoid credit card fraud, avoid excessive use of credit cards while in country. Contact your card provider and advise them what charges you will be making while visiting the DR. Keep a close watch over your credit card charges even weeks after leaving the Dominican Republic. Fraudulent charges may not appear until well after you have returned to your place of origin. To avoid ATM fraud, use only ATMs that are located in major hotels, or collocated with banks. Avoid using carro publicos, the least expensive type of taxi. Many travelers have reported being pick pocketed in these vehicles. Use established taxi services, or hotel taxis, which are considered safe.

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